

State of Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Dr. Tokpa,

Members of the Bong Legislature Caucus,
My wife, Hon. Mariamu B. Fofana,
Senior Staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Members of the Press,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

May I take this time to welcome you all especially Dr. Henrique F. Tokpah, our incoming Minister and Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Hon. Dr. Tokpah, you have come to the MIA at the time when our needs are so many with limited resources especially so when we have been asked by GOL through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) to relook at our budget in terms of taking a major cut due to National Budget Shortfall. This means that we may not be able to add another bus to the existing struggling one that can't satisfy our current need. Let me thank the entire employees through the employee Association for their support and understanding.

Mr. Minister, you have come at the time when I have put in place proper coordination among departmental heads for better support to the office of the Minister. This process even yielded more result as a result of a regular senior staff meeting.

Hon. Minister, you have come at the time when our Development Partners are fully energized and financially prepared to support the GOL policy document on Decentralization.

In December 2015, the Swedish Government signed with the Government of Liberia US\$5,000,000.00 (Five Million United States Dollars) grant agreement in support of the Decentralization program. USAID has a commitment of initial US\$1,000,000.00 (One Million United States Dollars) to also support this program. The European Union US\$5.5 Million and the GOL is equally committed to this process as well.

May I inform you that the first phase of our Decentralization Program is de-concentration which has to do with taking services to the people. This process has led us in opening Counties Service Center in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. We also expect additional three (3) to come online in Sanniquellie,

Gbarnga and Kakata before the end of February. Voinjama will not come online now due to a fire incident that burned the entire roof of the Administration building intended to host the County Service Center.

Hon. Minister, you have come at the time when we have concluded the staffing of the National Identification Registry (NIR). This includes the Executive Director, the two Deputies and support staffs. NIR has since started work and you will be fully briefed as we progress the process of issuing National Identity to our citizens and residents.

Reconciliation

Dr. Tokpah, you have come at a time when we have articulated GOL positions on the preparation of the new statement of mutual commitment which is financed by the Peace Building Commission Office in New York. This process helps GOL fund rule of Law, Justice and Security, and Peace and Reconciliation programs.

Mr. Minister, the Peace Building Office here at the MIA is functional and the President of Liberia has appointed Rev. Dr. William R. Tolbert, III, as Peace Ambassador of the Republic of Liberia.

Disaster Relief

Mr. Minister, you have also come when we are well advanced on the setting up of the National Disaster Agency. This process if concluded, the GOL will be largely supported by US Africa Command.

Dr. Tokpah, you have come at the time the Ministry through the President's Office has submitted to the National Legislature two bills.

- A. The National Disaster Agency Bill which has passed the Lower House and it is now at the House of Senate for concurrence.
- B. The Local Government Act which changes the name of this Ministry.

Mr. Minister, the Senior Staff of this ministry is fully energized and ready to give you support in achieving the goal set by Government of Liberia. This goal includes supervising the 15 Counties, making sure that we have social cohesion, creating the enabling environment for the conduct of National Elections, such as the 2017 General Elections.

Habitat III Report

Mr. Minister, Liberia through the Department of Urban Affairs is currently participating in series of preparatory meetings to form Africa common position for UN General Assembly meeting to be held in Quato, Equador on sustainable Urban Housing Financing and the new Urban Agenda. This Program is held every 20 years.

Liberia has prepared and submitted its Habitat Report to the UN Habitat Secretariat for review.

The Urban Affairs Department is being supported also for development. Currently, there is a pilot project being implemented by Monrovia City Corporation (MCC) known as the Monrovia City Program funded by Cities Alliance.

Hon. Minister, there is a planned high level meeting from Cities Alliance to meet with you to begin discussions on a Country Program for Liberia.